

HEALTH
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WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

SOMERSET.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1949.



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THE WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR 1949.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Peck, and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to present to you my annual report upon the Health and Sanitation of your district for the year 1949.

The civilian population of the district is estimated at 12,760, and the estimated number of inhabited houses 3,865. The Rateable Value is £66,616 and the sum of £267.0s.4d., is represented by a penny rate.

Vital Statistics.

The Registrar General's Return shows 158 live births, of which 73 were males and 85 females. There were 7 still births and four deaths of infants under one year of age. The birthrate is, therefore, 12.38 per thousand and the infant mortality rate 25.32 per thousand live births.

Health Services.

The steam disinfecter at the Williton & District Hospital for the Aged Sick is now working again and is being used when the steam disinfection of bedding is required after a case of infectious disease. The Taunton Isolation Hospital is available for isolating the infectious persons.

Notifiable Diseases.

Infectious Disease.

No. of cases
notified.

Small Pox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Scarlet Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Diphtheria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Enteric Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Measles	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	116
Whooping Cough	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14
Puerperal Pyrexia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Dysentery	...	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Malaria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Pneumonia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Acute Poliomyelitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Encephalitis Lethargica	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Chicken Pox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	nil
Erysipelas	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
(Non-Respiratory)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2

There were 7 deaths from Tuberculosis and 1 from Cerebro-spinal meningitis.

Housing.

The provision of new Council Houses is still receiving greatest attention. The Housing Act, 1949, came into force this year and allows Local Authorities to make grants towards improvement of existing houses and conversion of other buildings to provide housing accommodation. So far, no applications which would merit a grant have been received.

New Houses completed by the Council.....	28
" " " " Private Enterprise...	5

Rural Housing Survey.

The inspection of housing conditions continues, and at the end of the year about 80% of the Survey had been completed.

Housing Act, 1938.

The Smithy Cottage at Holford, which was reported as being unfit for habitation has now been made fit. Demolition Orders were served on the owner of Lilac Cottages, Lime Street, Stogursey and these cottages have now been demolished.

Water Supplies.

Water shortages occurred this summer at Luckwell Bridge, Cutcombe and Monksilver, when a new spring was added to the Cutcombe supply as an emergency measure. Other work done included renewal of lengths of corroded main at Luckwell Bridge and Church Street, Timberscombe, and the cleaning out and repair of Rowden reservoir.

The National Trust have renewed their mains to give a better supply at Doverhay, Porlock.

During the heavy storms in July, the Stogumber reservoir became flooded with surface water and the reservoir and mains had to be flushed and chlorinated.

The quality of the various supplies was fairly good, but 29 of the 136 samples taken were unsatisfactory and were followed by inspections and, where possible, improvements to the supplies concerned.

Drainage & Sewage Disposal.

The Stogursey Sewerage Scheme is now well in hand and arrangements are being made for connecting up houses which are not already on the sewer, and for the replacement of insanitary fittings by modern ones.

A defective common drain serving six houses at "Sunnyside", Hawkcombe, Porlock has been relaid and septic tank drainage has been provided to a number of houses in the district which were previously without proper drains.

Refuse Collection & Disposal.

The present contract for refuse collection is due to expire next year and a new contract has been signed with the Western Motor Services, Ltd., of Watchet, to carry out the collection for five years from April 1st, 1950.

A considerable amount of work has been carried out in tidying up the tips and covering exposed surfaces with earth. Most of this has been done on Bossington tip, the lease of which expires in June, 1950, but negotiations are taking place for a further extension of the lease.

Food Supplies.

Meat supplies continue to be distributed from the central slaughterhouse outside the district. Inspection of meat at the Minehead Abattoir was carried out by the staff of the Public Health Department for three weeks in the summer while the Minehead Sanitary Inspector was on holiday.

In October, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries became responsible for the administration of Milk Regulations relating to producers and producer-retailers. There remain four retailers only in the district for which the Council is responsible.

Inspection and sampling of Ice-cream received considerable attention and there has been a marked improvement in bacteriological quality.

Rodent Destruction.

Mr. H. Chidgey was appointed Rodent Operative for the Williton and Bridgwater areas in February, 1949, and has been employed for alternate fortnights in each district.

During the year the majority of treatments were carried out at private dwellings, 14 were of sewer systems and 24 of the Council's refuse tips.

Flies.

As a result of a mild winter and warm summer, there have been an unusually large number of flies on the hills this year and treatments have been carried out to destroy swarms in the roof spaces and other parts of houses in Sheddons Cross, St. Audries and Bilbrooke.

Summary of Inspections made by the Public Health Department.

Housing Acts.

Rural Housing Survey-Houses Surveyed.....	705
Houses inspected for individual defects.....	56
Demolition Orders made.....	2
Houses demolished.....	2
Informal Notices served.....	97

Public Health Acts.

Drainage.....	98
Nuisances.....	31
Water Supplies.....	39
Refuse Collection or Disposal.....	55
Camping Sites.....	26
Water Samples taken.....	159
Disinfections carried out.....	16
Disinfestations " "	5

Food & Drugs Act.

Inspections of Carcasses & other Food.....	10
Condemnations of unsound Food.	
Tinned (various).....	76
Cheese (lbs).....	137
Meat (").....	21½
Inspections of Shops and other Food Premises.....	13
" " Cowsheds & Dairies.....	26
Ice-cream samples taken.....	18
Milk samples taken.....	2
<u>Factories Act.</u>	
Inspections of Factories with Mechanical Power.....	5
" " " without " "	1
" " other Premises (e.g. building operations).....	3
Number of defects found.....	3
" " " remedied.....	3

Complaints.

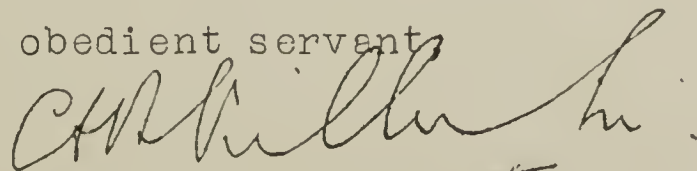
Number of Complaints received.....	121
" " " investigated.....	121

Public Health Administration.

The Public Health Staff consists of Mr. R. B. Perrett, Chief Sanitary Inspector, and Mr. A. F. M. Howard, Additional Sanitary Inspector, both of whom hold the Certificate of the R. S. I., for Sanitary Inspectors; Mr. Perrett also holds the Meat and Foods Inspector's Certificate. Mr. R. J. Ashman is Clerk to the Department.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant



M. B., Ch. B.

Medical Officer of Health to the
Rural District Council of Williton, Somerset.

